FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

REBELLING AGAINST THE SPIRIT

It is a well known and usually forgivable human trait—a person's believing that his answers to the questions of life and eternity and God ought to be everybody else's too. At its worst this impulse becomes fanaticism. Ordinarily it is nothing but a harmlessly egocentric yet fundamentally generous desire to save the world the pains we ourselves have had to endure while on our various ways to our answers. Look, the impulse seems to say, this is what I have come up with, it works for me, how foolish of you not to try it yourself.

And there is the opposite attitude. This is the feeling, also common, that my answer is mine and only mine and I am going to stick to it even if yours works better or so you say. Stick to mine, so uniquely of my own manufacture, I shall even though it may not be perfect, has in fact some bugs in it, and, frankly, leaves me with a couple of thousand unanswered questions.

The second attitude is the one I am prone to. Lately, with the help of friends, I have come to see that questioning is my preferred and habitual way of living mentally and emotionally and even spiritually. It is natural for me—if it isn't natural, it sure has been drilled into me by my folks, teachers, and all other purveyors of the laws of our land. But suddenly I see that it has become a trick of the mind that I have developed in order not to let go, in order (as long as I can keep it up) not to let God.

There are those special God-blessed individuals who appear to have been born with special aptitude for the spiritual life—Dostoevski reflected the attitude of the world toward such people

when he called his Prince Mishkin "the idiot." But most of us are not specially blessed, and we are obliged to learn to want the spiritual life for ourselves, each of us at his own time and at his own pace.

Learning to want the spiritual life does not, in most of us, mean that we undergo some dramatic or drastic episode on the road to Damascus. On the contrary, it seems to be a process as slow and mostly unnoticeable as the erosion of the earth and its hills and rocks. Then suddenly enough erosion has taken place for it to be visible—from a certain angle, that is, and momentarily. When the moment is over and we have regained a more normal position in our lives, the vision is gone. But the memory lasts. It does not linger on, as love is popularly supposed to. I can feel it radiating inside. It is like a hunger that requires satisfaction.

What I am taking note of is the discouraging fact that once I have lapsed back into a routine angle of vision I have to repeat the cycle of irritation, exasperation, weariness, and fatigue that led somehow to my first glimpse of the spiritual life. I am not immune to the depressions and despairs of others who are part of my daily life. I cannot keep myself from reacting to the general crossness of the people I have known for years. And, although I am discovering that when the day is over I am able, with privacy and reflection, to relocate that certain angle from which I first saw the spiritual life, I am rebelling against the apparent necessity of going through the preliminary erosion again and again and again. True, my confidence in being able to return to that precious angle of vision is a boon, wonderful just in its unexpectedness. But a revelation a day or a revelation per week is not in itself a satisfaction for the hunger I am aware of. A revelation, it seems to me, is only a first step—a miraculous peek at what lies ahead.

Why I stay at the first step, I am not sure. It could possibly be a simple craving for revelation, for the exotic taste of it. I might, like my cats, feel that if one can of tuna is good, two are twice as good. I suspect, though, it is plain laziness. . . .

It is becoming clear to me that if a second step is ever going to be taken I am the one who will have to take it—by my will, my efforts, my strength. The one thing I have learned by the age of fifty is that as long as there is life there is obviously going to be the need of exertion on my part. I used to think that when St. Paul urges us to pray without ceasing he was being a zealot. I think now that he was merely stating the facts. How I am going to achieve this monumental task at the same time that I "let go," I am sure I don't know. I have arrived at a paradox. Or a riddle.

It occurs to me that something has to give if I am going to solve this situation. I see that the only element in it that will give is myself. So I inspect myself to try and find out what can be changed, and I realize that instead of getting up in the driver's seat, which is my characteristic response to any job that I must do, I must finally let go. It always comes back to that.

I have rebelled before at the difficulties of doing this. That kind of passivity (which, naturally, is how I see it) scares the daylights out of me. I ask myself why it does. Why? I guess it is really that I don't have any trust in God. This is irrational of me. Because up until recently I have had no relationship with Him whatsoever, let alone one that could cause a trauma. The fact is I know who He is but I'm not sure He will remember me. The fact is that deepdown I expect Him to cut me dead. Why? I am going to have to do some heavy self-analysis to figure this out. . . .

For openers, then, I can see that I am rebelling in more than a single way. I can see, too, that I am rebelling basically because I lack trust, I am afraid. That is as far as I've gotten. . . . Except that, as a result of that first glimpse from that certain angle, I can now imagine myself crossing the street one day and going up to Him and introducing myself loudly and clearly. Providing, of course, I ever find the nerve.

— P. G.

YOU CAN BE HEALED

Grenville Kleiser

Your first step in healing is to acknowledge that God is the only power. Trust Him implicitly. He will tell you what to do.

Take time often to pray to Him. Say, "Thy will be done." Then confidently leave the results to Him.

You recognize and develop your best thoughts in silence, solitude and meditation. Relax your mind and body. Cultivate quietness, poise and awareness.

Delight to do the will of God. Look to Him for everything. Know that He supplies you with everything needful for your highest welfare.

Use constructive affirmations of what you wish to establish in your daily life. Impress them deeply upon your subconscious mind by frequent repetition.

Develop self-control by cultivating such cardinal personal qualities as patience, humility, poise, stability, awareness, understanding and equanimity.

Gratitude is a healing power. Be thankful for your privileges and opportunities. Enrich your life with thoughts of appreciation and graciousness.

Claim your spiritual birthright as a child of God. Live an abundant life of good thoughts and good deeds. Do your best today.

Faith, courage and good-will make you master of the situation. Do something for someone. Little acts of good-will bear good fruit—a word of praise, a smile of approval, a thoughtful letter, the gift of a helpful book.

Make lists of significant words and repeat them aloud. Examples: Gentleness, Love, Aspiration, Hope, Constancy, Nobility, Discretion, Zeal, Enthusiasm, and Contentment.

Pray humbly. Ask for guidance, protection, and spiritual enrichment. Be worthy of your alliance with Christ.

Cultivate a diverting hobby suited to your taste and temperament. Keep a scrapbook, play crossword puzzles, commit to memory short poems and prose quotations, practice penmanship and drawing, choose bits of good humor for ready use, be interested in words as symbols of ideas, write short letters of praise, read a good book.

Choose Christ as your pattern of character and conduct. Emulate His example in thought, word and deed. Make Him your daily companion, counselor and comforter.

Fervently desire to know God better as the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Freely share your spiritual riches with others. Be guided by the wisdom of God in everything you do.

You are endowed with the power of choice. Resolve to live a full, useful, radiant, fruitful life.

Cultivate creativeness. Study to be quiet. Keep your mind and heart open to the influx of spiritual ideas. In times of trial and test, look resolutely to God.

Advancing years should bring a golden harvest, a life mellowed by loyalty to divine principle and the doing of kindly deeds.

The worst thing that can befall you is to have nothing useful to do. From that moment, life will be an aimless, aching void and time a cruel torturer. A life of ease and sloth is a daily purgatory and a cause of widespread unhappiness. It is incomprehensible that in this day of golden opportunity there should be anyone, in good health, with nothing to live and work for.

The joy of work, of daily conquest, of new enterprises—these make life interesting and worthwhile. Find your right vocation, put your best abilities to daily use, work cheerfully, willingly, and courageously, and you will know the joy of true living.

Put into actual practice now the splendid things you expect to do at some future time, and your life will be wonderfully trans-

formed. Thousands of people have made the mistake of thinking that at a more favorable time they would radically change their habits, plans, methods, aims and ideals. The only real assurance of your desire to elevate your life is your willingness to initiate some of the desired changes now. What you think you will do some other time may never come to pass, but what you accomplish today is a substantial certainty.

Be sincere in your self-judgment. If there is in you any moral imperfection, false pride, indolence, or indulgence, look at it fearlessly and resolve to conform your life to God's perfect plan. Do not defraud yourself by passing lightly over faults that you know should be eradicated from your nature.

Know your true motives. Remember there is nothing finer than a spirit of sincere service, which gives generously without thought of recognition or return. True greatness lies in giving rather than in receiving.

TO AN UNSEEN MOCKINGBIRD *Emily Sargent Councilman*

Invisible singer
of infinite song,
high in your free
anonymity,
have you learned the secret
of giving, unseen?
Need you no thanks,
no acclaim, O serene
bearer of gifts
from infinity?

My heart is clean-swept
for your song.

POOR OLD JOHN

Jan Wachter

Old John, a fisherman, comes out to sea
When his wife, Lillian, is at the store
So he can dwell within past memory.

Without the need for rich society
But with the want for Neptune's secret lore,
Old John, the fisherman, comes out to sea.

He says, "The best things in this life are free,"
And travels to the beach, south of the moor,
So he can dwell within past memory.

Recalling days when sailing to Paree
Or in the Orient to Singapore,
Old John, a fisherman, comes out to sea.

He sits on sand around his century
Of clipper ships and treasures on sea's floor,
So he can dwell within past memory.

Regretting that he is a refugee
Of present time forevermore,
Old John, a fisherman, comes out to sea
So he can dwell within past memory.

STRONG IN HIS STRENGTH

Emma S. McLaughlin

No use looking the second time. One glance from my window was enough to assure me the branch was down. Even before I noticed it on the ground, I was aware of *that.* There was a decided lack of symmetry, a disturbance of what had been almost perfect balance when last I looked out at the pine tree. Could it have been only yesterday?

My final act before going to bed is to pause by the window, winter or summer, and look at the quiet peace of the yard. There is always something of beauty to gather close, to ease the tensions of a full day and lull me into restful, dreamless slumber. In the summertime it might be a night bird silhouetted against the sky, or a late firefly bobbing along with his tiny lantern. Often it is nothing more than shadows, moving and changing in the moonlight. When snow covers the earth, there will be rabbits searching for a midnight snack, or a lone skunk poking about under the feeder for donations left by the birds.

Last night there was the miracle of an early snowfall. During the evening I returned to the window time and again to watch its progress, to see the yard take on a new, mysterious look. All harsh angles were softened, and dear, familiar forms were hidden beneath glittering covers. Trees stood like choirboys, in surplices of white. I marveled at their beauty.

I know that snowflakes, though light and airy, can build up until the weight becomes too much to bear, but I am always loath to help the trees unload their burdens. How can anything so beautiful become a threat? I went to sleep wrapped in the silence.

With the coming of morning, I looked out upon a changed world, sparkling purity, but the pine bough lay twisted and broken under the accumulated weight of the snow. There had been no one to help it. How could we guess the condition of the heart within its cover of glory?

I stood looking out at the tree, long green needles and new young cones dragging the snow. I felt only sadness that we had not been better stewards of our treasure, that we had been soundly sleeping when help was needed.

How like the trees we are. We walk through life, each bearing a private burden and knowing a separateness even though surrounded by our own kind. There is no way to guess when these burdens become too heavy; we are so adept at covering hurts, hiding our heartaches and disappointments. We cry out in little ways, wanting to be known, to be accepted, to be loved, but those we come in contact with see only the brightness, the seeming beauty of outward appearances. They do not guess the condition of the heartwood until it is too late. Often, when they do become aware, they are loath to face the cold winds of our storms, lest they become too deeply entrapped in the drifts. Flake by flake our private snowfalls build until we snap under the weight of them.

How like the trees we are, yet how unlike, for we do not have to depend upon our strength alone. There is one who stands ready to shoulder our burdens and to carry them through any storm. In our isolation, we have access to a higher power through prayer. Like morning sunlight, communion will melt the deepest snow and we will be able to meet each new day completely whole—strong in His strength.

KEY TO LOVE

Jaye Giammarino

When God enters the heart
man has at last
opened the door
to love.

More excerpts from. . .

THE MESSENGER AND HIS TREASURE

Francis Merchant

The Human Experience

"What does it mean to undergo the human experience?" the Messenger inquired. "Seldom is the question asked, and even more seldom is an answer attempted."

To be human is to be born a small and helpless infant in a vast and illimitable world, to be completely dependent for a time on the support given by parents, to submit to the frustrations of childhood, to develop and expand the mind by study, to discover a vocation, to achieve a meaningful relationship toward the opposite sex, to confront problems to which no answers can be found, to be disillusioned, to be subjected to the unceasing pressure of time, to succeed and to fail, to search for the heights in the depths, to learn the significance of good by experiencing the effects of evil, to know for a certainty that it will be necessary one day to put aside the body and enter an altogether different domain of reality.

To be human is to be a question in search of an answer.

To be human is to stand at the crossroads with the choice of retrogressing to the beast or advancing toward the Christ.

To be human is to discover one's spiritual greatness in the dimensions of littleness.

Nature will provide for a man's physical growth, but only he himself can add a spiritual cubit to his stature. In the human state man declares whether he will choose to move backward to the animal kingdom or forward to the company of self-realized souls.

Innumerable are the perils that beset each person who enters upon the human experience. Some persons are halted by inertia,

others by fanaticism or despair or disillusionment, or the lure of pleasure and power, or a persistent refusal to curb the rebellious personality. No man's path is easy, be he king or shoemaker—but yet both have equal opportunities to pass through the fiery ordeal of experience heroically. Certain basic alloys in human nature must be burnt out, for the unregenerate self is unprepared for the next stage of unfoldment.

To be human is to feel separate and alone in a bewilderingly vast and complicated universe.

To be human is to fight one's way in battle after battle from darkness to light.

To be human is to battle through jungles and deserts to the narrow path whose ultimate end is lost in the radiance of the glory of God.

Transcending Human Nature

Everything changes, observed a pessimist, except human nature. For countless centuries it has remained constant. Selfishness has existed since time began, and it will probably endure long after this civilization has faded into history. What say you to that, Messenger?

The petrifaction and ossification of consciousness are indeed cause for concern, rejoined the Messenger, and the condition of man is directly related to his unwillingness to transmute and transcend human nature. This failure represents a tragedy. Caves of the mind have remained dark and unilluminated, shut off from the spiritual source of light. Hence there have been no reconstruction of consciousness, no transcending of petty human limitations, no regeneration of the spirit. Failure to transmute that which is human into that which is heroic constitutes a direct cause of man's present predicament.

That there are hard lumps and osseous masses in human nature, I do not deny. Congealed clots, of rust and dirt, have be-

come deeply ingrained in consciousness. These dark knots have been there so long that they are now regarded as normal. Apologists have not been wanting who proclaim these carbuncles natural. In actuality, these excrescences must be burnt or cut out of human nature. Many people must endure the fiery furnace of suffering and pain in order to eradicate these stains. The calamities that befall the human race are not unrelated to the stubborn resistance put up by those who cling greedily to these mildewed roots.

Great souls have again and again shown that the rotted rust in human nature can be eradicated. St. Francis preferred poverty to riches. Boehme showed that a humble shoemaker could live an heroic life. Akbar The Great, though an emperor with many cares, never forgot God. The Buddha and the Christ proclaimed by their lives that they had overcome the festering canker of self-seeking greed.

Human nature must be transcended — not inertly accepted. To reshape it is a primary task of mankind. Either the individual does this voluntarily or life arranges purificatory circumstances. Failure to engage in this creative task entails inevitable penalties. Many people suffer from their so-called human nature and know not that their spiritual progress is dependent on their endeavor to modify, reshape, and sublimate it. Herein lies the struggle for perfection — the struggle to convert what is meanly human into what is spiritually heroic.

Apply the torch, then, that converts the rocks and ice in human nature to eternally aspiring flame.

The Right to Suffer

A chemist declared that he had discovered formulas for eliminating suffering from human experience. Drugs, he maintained, are the grand panacea for all human ills. When a man is depressed, he asserted, I give him a pill that restores him to a normal state of mind. When he is excessively nervous, I prescribe a tranquilizer. When he is in pain, I administer an anesthetic. Chemistry will

yet cure the human race of all its afflictions.

The Messenger demurred.

Every man, he said, has a right to suffer and should not be deprived of it. The ministry of pain, deprivation, and tribulation is but little understood. No man really reaches maturity unless he is first purged and molded by the flames of suffering, unless the first of harsh experiences has made him whole.

Until a man has learned the lessons that pain has to teach him, he is unformed and incomplete. Only when his toys lie broken at his feet can he move forward in freedom. Only when he can say, I know because I have suffered, can he surmount the hill of attainment.

Be not in haste to divest a man of his suffering. He needs it as the grass needs rain. From his afflictions, if he is wise, he can create priceless jewels. As a butterfly grows strong by beating its wings against the imprisoning cocoon, so may he develop an intrepid spirit by grappling with the obstacles that confront him on the path he treads. The spirit, limited and confined in matter, gathers strength by overcoming resistance. Great souls have transmuted a heavy burden of afflictions — and that has added a special dimension to their victories.

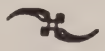
He who flees from suffering, rejects a civilizing and regenerating force. By so doing he refuses to accept the reshaping fires of transmutation. Suffering is the brother of humility and the sister of compassion. Although it defines the law for the lawless, it may also arise from the resistance encountered by the sunward-striving spirit.

Precious is the right to suffer, for in this process the part is welded to the whole and the assertiveness of the ego melted into union with the overarching will that suffuses space with starlight.

Different are the degrees of suffering. The thwarting of of self-will causes one type of distress, the breaking of the law another. The transmutation of the baser metals in man into the the gold of the spirit adds another dimension to suffering. The rejection of the treasure that the great-hearted achiever places at the feet of humanity causes a different order of pain to arise in

his consciousness.

The right to suffer is a corollary to the right to liberty. Progress involves resistance. Great souls have all drunk a chalice of poison. The regeneration of the world may depend on what we learn to extract from our afflictions. Saving essences are distilled from painful sufferings.



SHOULDERS STRONGER THAN MINE

Judy Shepps

Shoulders stronger than mine
have failed this burden &
broken beneath the weight
of sorrow I carry.
Shoulders stronger than mine
have shrugged and said
simple sighs and split.
So I take up my own
and walk towards the sun
away from the stars
and into the dawn.

May the silence of the hills,
The joy of the winds,
The peace of the fields,
The music of the birds,
The fire of the sun,
The strength of the trees,
And the faith of a little child,
In all of which is God,
Be in your hearts. Amen.

SPRING SONG

Eleanor Ebersole

Once there was a little girl who knew, almost from the very beginning, that she had a song to sing, but she could never sing. Her lips and her lungs didn't know the song, only her heart.

Sometimes it seemed as though the song would just float, or burst from the flowers, but it never did.

The little girl listened to other voices, drew in the melodies of the wind, the firs, the meadow grass. All were able to sing, but not she. It became a very sad thing to have a song to sing and not be able to sing it.

"Will you sing for me?" she asked the wind.

"I will," said the wind. "What song do you want me to sing?"

The girl couldn't tell.

"Sing for me, little fir," she said.

"What song shall I sing?" the fir replied.

"Well, I don't know. I can't tell you."

"Please," she whispered to the meadow grass. "Sing for me."

"What shall I sing?"

"Well," the girl hesitated. "Well. . . ."

"Whisper to me," the meadow grass said. "Let me hear your lips."

It seemed very silly at first to her to lie down in the grass and whisper. The breeze blew and encouraged her. The fir hummed along a bit and the sun warmed her as she lay.

"Humm," she hummed. The melody found itself. She sang her song to the grass and the grass accompanied her. So did the wind. The melody became the song that all of them knew. Together the wind, the fir, the meadow grass and the girl sang her song. And their world was different for the song that they knew.

Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees. —Victor Hugo

POET'S PRAYER

Everard Thomson

May I write simply as
A little child at prayer,
Yet touch deep things of God
And find Him everywhere.

May I write winging words
(The love of God my goal)
That charm, then linger on
To echo in the soul!

PRAYER OF IMPLORATION

Marion J. Richardson

Show me
how to be calm,
not frustrated
or dissatisfied—
wanting
what I don't have.
Show me
how to have patience
and interest
in the troubles
of others
that mine may seem
insignificant
by comparison.

TRULY A COMMUNION OF KINDRED SPIRITS

Velta Myrle Allen

Many years ago my family lived only a few miles from General Grant Park high up in the Sierra Mountains and about ten miles from an Indian village.

Our closest neighbor was Ole Man Mose, who had located up there when he was a young fellow—no one ever found out why or bothered to ask him. His home was quite adequate though crude, with a big living room, rafters above, and a huge fireplace that was always ablaze with large smoke-spiralling pine logs. A favorite mounted deer's head with long antlers hung over it, and Ole Man Mose could easily toss his hat in its direction without looking and never miss domiciling it. He said he "didn't want no wimmin folks around messin' up his kitchen, 'cause he could make the best corn pone ye ever set your teeth into." The apple and other fruit-bearing trees which he had planted years before provided more than he could use, so he gave it to anyone who happened to stop or he would take it to the Indian village to the "folks."

Ole Man Mose was not only a good neighbor, he was a good human being. He became advisor to the few families that had settled in the village. They were glad for all his information on where to find the wild berries, nuts, cucumbers, herbs, the best hunting for boar, and other useful provisions for a good life which nature so abundantly provided. Sometimes he sat around the campfire and told stories, true or false, for our information and enjoyment. His favorite was about a young Indian couple who "eloped" in a small canoe by placing it in the flume of water which carried the newly sawed lumber to the valley. His elaborations on this were different and better every time he told it.

We made camp one night at Hume to see the felled trees being shoved to the massive machinery where jagged saw-blades re-

duced them to planks. Then they were placed in the wooden flumes that ran constantly with water and were slanted so that it was carried swiftly to its destination through picturesque winding canyons. We walked over "corduroy" bridges and the dirt roads. We hunted for "buried treasure" which Ole Man Mose told us "might" have existed.

So it was this old well-informed and interesting mountaineer who helped us to enjoy a year-and-a-half in that virgin, lush country. It was Ole Mose who, while telling us about the Indian village, said, "They might invite you to share rattlesnake meat with them."

At that time the village was called Squaw Valley. We went there one Sunday a month, gathering together folks who lived nearby. We packed baskets with goodies and jogged over the rough roads, for horse-drawn vehicles were the means of transportation.

Our meeting-place was the one-room schoolhouse. We met there for our hymn service followed by a sermon from a visiting guest. There was an interpreter for the sermon, but the singing of hymns, as far as the Indians were concerned, was an individual experience. The movement of lips and tongues belied any idea that they did not know the words. There were possibly two hundred in that one room.

On dismissal, greetings were exchanged with gracious exchange of friendship. Outside, we spread papers and then tablecloths and placed our picnic on the ground. Yes, among other delicacies, there was rattlesnake meat.

Before we partook of the food, the medicine man thanked the Great Mystery for all blessings and associations. Then he told us much about nature—wherein God eternally dwells and even though man may try to disturb or improve this mysterious creation he cannot change the color of the sky, count the stars, change the distance between the earth and the sky, the seasons, or the direction of the winds, for God is the father of all and we are "brothers." He concluded by saying that although we take different paths to the Great Hunting Ground beyond the sky, our goal is the same.

It was truly a communion of kindred spirits, and with many the clasp of the hand and a smile was the understanding between us that eliminated any differences. . . .

PORTALS OF INSPIRATION

Josephine H. Voracek

If you are discouraged and nothing goes right. You're ready to quit and get out of the fight. Stop feeling sorry for yourself! Chin up—take a deep breath of clean-smelling air. Fill your lungs until they almost burst. After doing this three or four times, you will actually feel new vitality and energy spreading through you. For the air you breathe is *God.*

Now take a moment to look around at the endless sky and abundant ground. New hope for tomorrow in them will be found.

Listen to the singing of birds sweet and clear. Forget about your worries and be still to see as well as to hear. Face the future without any fear.

Take notice of how blossoms and leaves rear their proud heads in sparkling brightness of day. You'll find that their faces are turned toward the sun—and that each looks absorbed in prayer. Take a lesson from the seeds and bulbs that are buried in darkness of earth. They begin to toil toward shafts of light that sift through a crack in the soil.

So *God's* light in darkness around you will spread if you whisper the shortest prayer of all: "God help me!" *He'll* not forsake you, and newfound zest will lift you above the turmoil. Like the seeds and the bulbs, push and prod with all your might. New courage *God* gives as you re-enter the fight. Trust *Him* and know all things will be right.

The best way to live is to trust the Lord; to keep peace in one's heart; to accept all things as being for the best; to be patient and good; never to do ill. —Pope John XXIII

GOD KNOWS

Esther Belle Heins

It was my grandmother's machine,
Though old and tired, it sews;
I dust it gently, wondering
About her day; God knows.

I picture mother in her home;
A child with joys and woes,
Then try to place the old machine—
Where did it stand? God knows.

Was mother called in from her play
For fitting of her clothes?
She was their only little girl,
What was she like? God knows.

I cannot ask her questions now,
A year ago today—
She went to be with Him whose hand
So long had led her way.

The thread of life is in God's care
And through time's shuttle flows,
Through Christ He makes the seam that binds;
All views are His—He knows!

BENEDICTION

Everard Thomson

It is a shining, little prayer
That will stay with you all the week;
A halo round about your head,
A voice with echoes that still speak.

FOR THE LOST ONES *Carla Patsuris*

Folds of them and folds of them
Herding away
(Without their shepherd sheep must stray)
Shepherd, Shepherd,
Save the day!

THE DECISION

Phyllis Malone

May twentieth of that year looked like a day of promise. The skies had the appearance of burnished gold. It was clear and crisp, like a bite into a pippen apple. It was a morning to watch quilts and blankets dance on the clothesline in the breeze. It was a season for flying kites and for children to play jump-rope. The day gave no hint as to what the evening would bring.

Deciding which house to buy in this community had been a difficult decision. Both houses had been on corner lots. Each had a lawn that resembled unrolled carpeting. They were a mile apart and in the same school district. Which one should we buy? We knew that we could feel at home in either. One did have an advantage—a washer and a dryer. We had sold ours before we came home from the Orient. The two appliances made the final decision.

Our overseas shipment of household goods arrived, and the scurrying of settling-in began. I had a bolt of waffle-colored raw silk for draperies. In a few weeks I had the covering for a twelve-foot window ready for drapery rods. I planned to let them hang awhile before hemming. The last time I did this, it had taken two years to get my needle threaded again.

Close to dinner-time, that memorable evening, tornado alerts were broadcast over radio and television. Why pay any attention? It's sunny outside, I thought, and the tornado is spawning itself

seventy miles away.

After dinner, the atmosphere began to change. The news bulletins began to sound urgent. We were told of procedures to follow in the event of a disaster. The tornado was moving at a high rate of speed. It was gathering momentum. Air Force pilots have a sixth sense about the weather, and my husband Frank had his eye on the heavens. He told me to gather up a couple of blankets and flashlights. "Put them by the front door, and keep the two kids in the house with their jackets on." The telephone rang. A friend of Frank's at the air base, a radar man, was on the scope that evening. He was tracking the storm. "Unless this tornado changes its course in the next fifteen minutes," he said, "it will pass right through the center of town. I'll call you back if it looks like you'd better run."

My husband rushed through the neighborhood warning as many people as possible. The majority laughed. Later there was no laughter.

The air became mute, as if a gigantic vacuum-cleaner had sucked it up in the bag. Fortunately we had no rain. There was a rumbling in the distance, like a freight-train going through town during the stillness of midnight. The sky had changed to a bottom layer of stark white sky topped by layers of clouds black and forbidding.

The phone rang again: "You've got about three minutes before the tornado hits."

We ran to the house behind us, the only one in the block that had a basement. It was full of people. From the front windows we were able to view the oncoming twister slithering like a garter snake on its way over the hill. Someone screamed, "There it is! Run for the basement!" Everyone clutched a child's hand and headed in that direction. As the last person touched the bottom step, the storm struck.

We huddled in a corner of the unfinished lower level. The gas furnace made a leap into the air and crashed back to the floor. The house above us was being shaken as if by giant hands. We could hear the screech of the nails as the roof and the rest of the dwelling parted company. The children were crying. I could see

their mouths open in terror but couldn't hear their screams through the fury of the storm. The sound of my own prayer for protection seemed lost.

The storm was over. Frank tore out a window screen, and all of us climbed out of the basement. The landscape resembled the end of an age. Hot-water heaters and large appliances twisted counter-clockwise into grotesque positions were scattered over front and back yards. Our home was gone. The furniture stood there on the carpeting quite naked against the late evening sky. Hanging on a rafter, looking limp and forlorn, was a yard of my lovely raw silk. I almost laughed in the middle of chaos. Thank goodness I hadn't had time to put a long thread in that big needle. I sighed deeply and thanked God for his unseen arms of love and concern. Daylight was disappearing. Our group stood huddled together, feeling confused of mind.

The children were still sobbing. The area was becoming crowded with cars. Soon they were bumper to bumper. Some were looking for relatives or friends, but most of them were sightseers eager to view the effects of a tornado. Ambulances were hindered by thoughtless crowds. Martial law was declared for the next three weeks. The National Guard came within hours to discourage the many looters.

What happened to us? God fulfilled our every need. Different friends took us in for the next five weeks. Because the closets in the house stayed intact, our clothes were saved. Most of our furniture was useable. Within a week, our insurance company had our money in escrow and the reconstruction period began. Who helped this community without asking any remuneration? The Salvation Army and countless churches in the Kansas City areas. Menonites came many miles from the plains and worked for days at cleaning up the debris.

We realize now that God did not want us traveling in the direction we were racing. A washer and a dryer made the decision. The other house wasn't touched by the tornado.

A HALLOWED WORLD

Helen Gee Woods

This Sabbath morn,
there is a sanctity
of Peace, calm and gentle,
uneventful as a cloud
floats idly by.
I am renewed with strength
to keep this day
a hallowed world
in which to pray.

THANKS

Ruddy Esher

I thank thee Lord for thy good to me
I thank thee Lord for the good I see
I thank thee Lord for the summer all
I thank thee Lord for the spring to fall
I thank thee Lord for the winter too
I thank thee Lord for the whole year through
I thank thee Lord for the land that's tilled
I thank thee Lord for the need that's filled
I thank thee Lord for our friends so dear
I thank thee Lord for them far and near
I thank thee Lord for the faith to say
I thank thee Lord for this Easter day
I thank thee Lord for thy only son
I thank thee Lord that thy will be done
I thank thee Lord in a humble way
I thank thee Lord for a happy day

(Elizabeth H. Emerson, of Elon, N.C., is the author of three fine books. The Good Crop *— first published by Longmans Green and Company in 1946 — tells the story of a large Quaker family that in the year 1830 moves from Tennessee to Illinois.* The Gamered Sheaves *(1948) continues the family saga into later generations, focussing on a daughter named Sybil, who was Mrs. Emerson's own great-aunt. In* Glimpses of A Life *(1960) Mrs. Emerson uses direct autobiography to round out her picture of uniquely spiritual lives being lived in the midst of American history, from Lincoln on. "Aunt Emily" is a sample of Mrs. Emerson's unusual ability to portray a human being.)*

AUNT EMILY

Elizabeth H. Emerson

In the old Rees family portrait, Emily seems to me a stranger made up of a little part of each of her four sisters, one of whom was my mother. I never saw her. I find myself wondering: Were her eyes hazel, as were my mother Mary's? Did her hair have the rich red-under-brown color of her sister Martha's? Was her voice soft and low as her sister Sarah's? Was she tall, as her little sister Sybil later grew to be—Sybil, who, in the picture, occupies a lowly seat with her young brothers?

I wonder about the real Emily. Was she Rees all through? Was the distance between laughter and tears as short as it is wont to be in the Reeses? Was her love of family as great? Was there in

her that depth of sympathy which makes words unnecessary and friendship priceless?

What slender threads I have from which to weave a memory.

That day when the Rees family journeyed far over the Illinois prairie in order to "sit" for a woman photographer of great reputation, every picture was taken separately. The results were rather skillfully put together in a group, and the whole was fitted into a wooden oval frame. The general effect at a distance is that of a satisfactory unit—its members bound as closely by the photographer's art as they were in fact by the very ordinary common blood that flowed in their twelve sets of veins.

But the person who looks at that picture closely will soon discover that the four young ladies standing side by side in the back row are dressed exactly alike. Remarkable, isn't it, that there should have been four "waists" made from the same piece of cloth? Wait! You are jumping at conclusions. There was, in reality, only one waist, and each in turn donned it before sitting in the photographer's stiff-backed chair.

I think that the waist belonged to Emily. Emily was a subscriber to *Godey's Book*—Emily, the oldest daughter in a strict Quaker home! *Godey's Book*, the magazine of fashions! Forerunner of *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*. Perhaps by the light of a tallow candle made by her mother she studied out the pattern for the new waist from her first copy of *Godey's*. She talked it over with Matt, also mistress of the needle. Together they sat stitching and backstitching until the garment was finished. Then Sarah pressed it well with the flat-iron heated on the kitchen stove, and Mary, shut out from any part in the making by her care of the house and the many younger children, was not excluded from the wearing of it! So there they stand, four grown daughters of the Reeses, four "waists" of speckled cloth, not four but one. Emily might have said: "This waist is mine. I earned the money to buy the material. I subscribe to *Godey's Book*. I'll wear it." No. They had all things in common. Emily was generous.

These are the words of Sybil, thinking back more than seventy years:

"At the time Lincoln was running for President the second time, there was a great rally at Danville. Ridgefarm was sending a large delegation, and sister Emily was chosen to lead the procession. She rode a high-stepping horse and carried a large flag. She rode a side saddle, had a flowing skirt, a wide sash of flag bunting around her, also a sort of crown on her head. We children went a quarter mile down to the state road to see them pass. The folks were uneasy about her."

"The folks were uneasy about her." What serious discussion there must have been in the big kitchen before Emily was allowed to accept the honor of riding at the head of a political procession that sixteen miles to the county seat! It was not a Quakerly thing to do—not in the least. In the severe decorum of the Quaker tradition there was no place for the decking out of a Rees daughter with "flowing skirt," "wide sash of bunting," and "a sort of crown" upon her head!

But of course this was not the first time that Emily had mixed with the un-Quakerly world. There must have been lesser rallies to which she had gone, perhaps in company with her dashing redheaded Sam. A stay-at-home girl would never have been chosen for this signal honor and the doubtful privilege of riding sixteen miles on horseback to honor the great Lincoln. Perhaps gradually Grandmother had become a little accustomed to these sallies out of their quiet simple life into the world. And Grandfather, although very religious, was politically minded. He supported Lincoln wholeheartedly. After all, suppose Lincoln should not win the election! The fate of the country was at stake. Lincoln must win. The phrase "creating public opinion" had not yet been coined, but if a great rally at the county seat would help, if the presence of his fine-looking daughter Emily at its head would be of any assistance in so worthy a cause, then a kind Providence must keep her from harm. Nevertheless, "the folks were uneasy about her." Their Emily, bedecked in bunting, attracting the gazes of un-Christian people! Was this right? Would she conduct herself as a lady? And that high-stepping horse on the streets of Danville, among all the noise and confusion of horsedrawn streetcars, possible outrushings of fire-engines, thousands of people in wagons and spring-wagons and buggies—could this

high-stepper be trusted not to rear and plunge and hurl Emily under its feet?

What a long day it was on the farm, waiting, waiting for the return of Emily! But what a day for Emily herself, with all the drabness of her usual life left behind! Here were honor and color and gaiety such as she had never experienced! She held her square shoulders very straight, she tossed her flag-crowned head just to the point of maidenliness and not beyond. And she helped to elect Lincoln! Her father wanted that.

Emily was married at home. That means that she was not married "after the manner of Friends," in meeting. It may be that Sam was not a member of the Friends. If not, the danger to Emily of being disowned by the religious body of which she had been a member from birth was great indeed. Many a young woman in those days had to choose between marriage with the man she loved and remaining within the Quaker fold. Perhaps some minister was found who was willing to dare to break with tradition to the extent of marrying the couple in Emily's home. If so, he risked his ministerial neck to do it, for marriage was not a ceremony to be "said" by a preacher, but an exchange of sacred vows spoken by the two contracting parties. In one way, however, Emily subscribed to tradition. Her dress was gray. Nearly all Quaker wedding dresses were gray—soft shades of fine material which fell in graceful folds. Emily was a modestly appareled bride and a beautiful one.

When Emily bore her only child, a son, there was the question of a name. Sam didn't care, he said. Emily looked at the boy. He was long—body, fingers, toes, all were long. He would be a Rees. He should have a Rees name. Her father's name was William. *His* father's name was William. And *his* father's name was William. William it should be, but she would call him Willie—so bonny a baby he was.

And then Emily and Sam heard the call of the West, for Illinois had ceased to be that. With baby Willie they journeyed to Kansas and made their home on the prairie. Emily had not been afraid of crowds or high-stepping horses or the disapproval of the Quakers or separation from her family. Of only one thing was Emily afraid. When the clouds grew black and the thunder boomed

and the lightning cut the dark sky and the rain came in torrents against the little frame house unprotected by a single tree, Emily knew fear. When Sam was at home with all his joking and teasing, she could nearly forget her terror. But once Sam was away. She pressed her face against the window-pane as long as the rain and the coming night would let her see, hoping for the return of Sam. Then she hugged two-year-old Willie to her breast and prayed that the fury of the storm might break.

In that day when medical examinations were unknown, who could guess that Emily's heart was unequal to shock and strain? The storm rolled on to its final burst of madness, and when it had passed, Emily was dead. And the words "Emily is gone" (no sadder have ever been said) were passed from lip to lip of the big Rees family.

Having no memory of Emily to place beside those of Levi, Martha, my mother Mary, Sarah, Tom, Will, Sibyl, Perry, Omar, Bert, I have made my own, and it is good.

I GIVE THANKS TO GOD *Vivian M. Singerling*

I give thanks to God:
For my eyes —
that I can see
the beauty in all living things.
For my ears —
that I can hear
all joyful tones in life.
For my legs —
that I can walk
amid earth's sound and beauty
to observe with awe —
The Lord's wondrous power
of perpetual re-creation.

THE DAWN OF EASTER *Marjorie Martin*

"He is risen! He is not here!"
The words are spoken low and clear
Beside a tomb the lilies stand
In early dawn in a far off land.

Along the pathway flowers are springing
Along the way birds are singing
Their joyous song. Rejoice today!
He has passed along this way.

Voices rise clear and strong
Hearts jubilant in glad song
"He has come, cast out all fear
He is risen! He is not here!"

BLESSINGS INVITED *Leonard Opalov*

O, Fate, bestow
upon us
the laurel crown
of bliss.
Dispel all misty shadows,
and every
avarice.
Endow the world
with blessings
of spiritual worth,
with every sunray stressing
serenity's rebirth.

PRAYER INVITATION

You and your friends are invited to join a Healing Pool of Thought for Humanity. People throughout the world are meditating for five minutes or more a day on the thought "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

We believe that the Father's Plan for this planet is imminent *now*; and that the Plan can be established harmoniously if the people who are working for the Light will join their Thought Power at this moment. We realize that Prayer on the Universal level is the action of the Christ on earth and that It cannot be denied.

We suggest the hour of Dawn as a regular appointment for Meditation—seven days a week. But any other time of the day or night will be just as effective. At any moment, when you tune in to this Stream of Power, you will find that you are in the company of those who intend to work until Mankind is brought into his heritage.

If you feel inspired to do so, please pass this message on to as many as you possibly can. We merge in Spirit with all the groups who are doing similar work; and in the Name of the Father It shall be accomplished. *Florence De Groat*

SUN OF HOPE

Jaye Giammarino

When hope
illuminates
the dark wintery heart
it soon melts the armor-plating
of fear.

STAR-PATTERNED HAPPINESS

Alice Richmond

All things ye would that men do to you
do ye so unto them. . . .
Happiness, good teachers remind us,
harbors the quality of thought visibly defined
in Life's secret of God-awareness,
then giving, like water's sure flow,
finds its own true height by aeons' radiance.
Thus should we, through Christ outreaching,
help sad mankind, muted souls with love encircle,
comfort their sorrow, easing their dull pain,
and like a deep well of water sweet inviting
shall we return to enjoy great loveliness gained:
here recognize the value of treasured fellowship.
Outgoing should we quest, our kindliness share,
heartache pacify, good Father's blessed gift of Self
refresh, that childhood's teacher spoke of gently,
glad magic apprehend by showing each lone brother
God's risen light, to fill bright lamps with happiness.
When we give, our prayerful delicate hands
sharing His light, we apprehend the Truth
of Glory's warmth serene, sunrise eternal
reflecting happiness world-wide through One;
as mankind we awaken, God-filled progression
reveals Life joy-seeding tenderly unveiled,
Love's precious heart exposed in Creator's star-pattern!

APPRAISEMENT

Marie Transue

My old inharmonious self has been put aside, and the inherent quality of true self is now free to seek its real goal, which is becoming one with its living source. It is free to be sealed forever in the Perfect Conscious Being, one with God and He one with me.

There are no words to express the intoxicating awareness that one has when at last one has found the door that leads home. Only a kindred seeker can experience a like glimmer. . . .

What diverse roads we travel through this imperfect vale seeking for 'truth of identity.' The way is long or short according to one's strength for striving. The way is always lonely and beset by trials, stumblings, turnings, and disappointments, sometimes even disbelief. Reality, like a straw blown in a gale, is hard to catch and harder to hold onto.

The cumulative sense of individuality comes only when one is brought to a realization that all are free, essentially, and that the only bondage lies in self. Only then can one grow in world-soul understanding. Further, it is only by the painful process of peeling off each imperfect husk, stripping it down to the core, that the transitory soul of self rebounds to the original source and melds with the absolute in perfect harmony. . . .

My soul, having newly risen from bondage, is singing a new song yet not new, for the siren-melody is as old as infinity, only understanding is new. Held beyond the ken is absolute mind till such time as one has freed one's self to interpenetrate with others on like quest.

This new self, wandering through the clouded mirage of life, may stumble, but never again can it lose the radiance and melody of harmonious oneness with the conscious perfect being.

Some day this life will pass, self will rise above the apex of being, effervesced in the joy of perfect harmony, spiralling through many an apex to final being in celestial glory.

A CHRISTIAN'S PLEA *Cindy Edwards*

Holding love in can hurt your soul
Holding pain in can make you die
Never fear a smile to shed
Or ever a tear to cry

How will I know what you really are
If you don't ever let your love show?
One word of what you believe in
And I would quickly know

Pain is just a part of life
It passes, quickly, too
Just once will you extend your hand
And let me help you through?

PRAYER FOR A WORLD THAT IS WRONG

Marion Schoeberlein

Oh world, there is so much wrong hammered together here.
There are so many bones that ache and so many hearts that hate.
There are so many voices that slay. What shall we do?
Sometimes when the fugue of day is hushed. . . sometimes
When I kneel before your stillness, God, I think how
Your hands are fire and could create beauty out of us.
Why cannot you make of man a robe of roses? Then he would be
Better than man.... Why cannot he be as clean as the rivers,
As strong as the trees, as high as the hills, oh God?
God, oh the mate of my dreams, come forth to heal this world!
We are the people of your earth, but a robe outworn with sin—
Make us better than a heart of chaff. We are more than grass.

TRUSTEES MEET. Fellowship in Prayer's Board of Trustees met in New York City one evening in February to plan current and upcoming activities—among them, expansion of prayer-groups here and abroad, taping of more interviews for use on radio, the holding of additional meetings around the country. Afterwards, Executive Secretary Kathryn G. Brown entertained the Board at supper.

ADVISOR HONORED. Eastern Zone Advisor Reuben L. Musey is the recipient of the George Washington Medal Award from Freedoms Foundation for his 1971 address called "Lest We Forget." In 1968 he won the same honor for his writing.

EASTER

Albert Jacobsen

There comes a genial time in many lands,
When Nature feels a stir of might—
When dormant bud of leaf and flower expands
And newborn creatures see the light.

At Calvary, o'er nineteen centuries past,
Occurred that cruel and ghastly deed.
But Resurrection's miracle forecast
Birth of a glorious human creed.

Now splendid songs and oratorios
And floral tributes' grand displays
Greet Spring, the greatest of terrestrial shows,
And proclaim Easter's paean of praise.

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PRAYER FOR A FRIEND

Emma S. McLaughlin

Lord of butterfly and bee,
Bless my friend, the chickadee.
He is pert, audacious, gay,
He can turn the bleakest day
Into one of rose and gold,
Seeming to defy the cold;
Instantly he can erase
Lines of worry from my face.
Hold him in Your hand tonight,
Safely sheltered, hid from sight
In his star-encrusted tree.
Lord, he brings such joy to me.